

SURVIVAL AFTER DEATH: ALAN GAULD'S EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE

BY WILLIAM G. ROLL

A quarter of a century ago, in 1959, J. B. Rhine (1960) held a conference at Duke University on whether science can answer the question Does human personality persist after the death of the body?

Several important things in survival research have happened since then. The University of Virginia has established a research center, under Ian Stevenson, directed largely at investigating apparent re-birth memories; the research arm of the American Society for Psychical Research, under Karlis Osis, has devoted its main energies to the exploration of out-of-body, near-death, and apparitional experiences; and the Psychical Research Foundation (PRF) has explored the question whether human personality and consciousness extend beyond the body mainly by field investigations and studies of psi sensitives. The creation of the PRF was a direct outcome of the Duke conference. Charles E. Ozzanne, who had a longstanding interest in the survival issue, was persuaded by the meeting to create a research center that would explore the survival issue in the objective manner of the conference papers. The formation of the PRF then was an explicitly positive response to Rhine's question. Was it justified? An occasion to consider this issue arises from Alan Gauld's (1982) *Mediumship and Survival: A Century of Investigation*.¹

Gauld, who is a professor of psychology at Nottingham University, England, and a member of the Council of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), has written two other important books in the field: *The Founders of Psychical Research* (1968) and, with A. D. Cornell, *Poltergeists* (1979). In both volumes, the survival issue is central. Gauld (1971) has also conducted a major study of "drop-in" communicators. Indeed, Gauld's writing, as well as his researches of reputed haunting cases and drop-in communicators, are among the major events in survival research during the past 25 years.

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In *Mediumship and Survival*, Gauld goes beyond the title and examines reports of supposed rebirth memories, apparitions, out-of-body experiences, and possession. The volume is part of a series published on the centennial of the founding of the SPR.

The introductory chapter gives the dual task Gauld sets for himself: (1) to weigh the evidence against nonpsychical explanations and (2) to weigh the evidence against the "super-ESP" hypothesis. In other words, can the findings suggestive of survival of personality after death be dismissed as being due simply to chance coincidence, say, between the statements of a medium and the circumstances of a deceased person, to sensory cues, to cheating by the medium, and so on? If the answer is no, can it be supposed that the medium simply acquires the information by ESP from the living relatives or friends of the deceased or from obituaries and so on? Gauld refers to this as the *super-ESP* theory.

Gauld shows, and I think convincingly, that the better mediumistic studies, case reports of apparitions, and so on, cannot easily be reduced to chance coincidence or to sensory cues. The focus of his discussion is the thesis-antithesis of survival versus super-ESP.

Gauld uses the term *super-ESP* in two senses. On page 129, he complains that the super-ESP theory is "... not so much a theory as an attitude of mind—an attitude which simply refuses to admit that there is *or ever could be* [Gauld's italics] any evidence for survival which cannot be explained away in terms of the psi faculties, especially the ESP, of living percipients and mediums." If the super-ESP theory can be stretched to cover any conceivable finding, the theory is unfalsifiable, therefore unverifiable and therefore, it would seem, not an empirical theory. If it is argued that ESP is, in fact, omniscient or limitless, this is tantamount to saying that it falls outside the domain of science. But Gauld usually takes a narrower view of ESP. When he asks whether evidence suggestive of survival can be explained in terms of super-ESP, he usually refers to the present evidence for ESP from experimental research or case studies. Gauld also reminds us that any manifestation of the deceased involves ESP or PK. It is not a question, then, of attributing the evidence *either* to ESP or, say, to mediumistic communications from the deceased. The choice is between what we might call this-world-ESP (or PK) and ESP (or PK) involving deceased personalities.

In the chapter "Mediumship: General," Gauld draws a parallel between the mediums of modern societies and the shamans in other cultures. He makes the interesting observation that, like some shamans, some mediums may go through periods of emotional

disturbance that subside after, and perhaps as a result of, their training.

Mediums are traditionally divided into mental and physical mediums. With the former, the deceased supposedly make themselves known through mental images or impressions or by automatic writing and other behavior that reflect conscious or unconscious mentation in the medium. With physical mediumship, the effects consist of physical occurrences outside the medium's body, such as movements of objects or tapping sounds. If genuine, these incidents presumably are due to the medium's psychokinetic abilities, but the contents of the information, such as messages spelled out by the raps, may suggest a deceased person. The book mainly concerns mental mediums.

"The Mediumship of Mrs. Piper" is an account of the discovery by William James of Leonora Piper and the studies he and others did with her. The precautions against fraud seemed adequate (for instance, private detectives were used to check her movements), and chance could hardly explain the better results. Three cases are taken from James's (1909) "Report on Mrs. Piper's Hodgson Control." In these, Hodgson, who had been secretary of the American Society for Psychical Research and a principal Piper researcher, seemed to communicate through her after his death in 1905. The communications included private circumstances in Hodgson's life that Mrs. Piper could hardly have known about. One was about an incident that had occurred in James's home. During a session with Mrs. Piper in 1906, Mrs. James asked "Hodgson" to recall the night he had argued with her sister in James's library. Mrs. James says, "I had hardly said 'remember' . . . when the medium's arm was stretched out and the fist shaken threateningly, then these words came: ' . . . Yes, I did this in her face. I couldn't help it. She was so impossible to move. It was wrong of me, but I couldn't help it.'" William James was present at the sitting and ". . . well remember[ed] this fist-shaking incident, and how we others laughed over it after Hodgson had taken his leave. What had made him so angry was my sister-in-law's defense of some slate-writing she had seen in California" (p. 38). Hodgson had a reputation for unmasking fraud and had come to the U. S. (in 1887) to take charge of the Piper investigation.

Could this, and other ostensible communications, be due to telepathy between Mrs. Piper and the sitters? An amusing example that also throws light on the nature of some communicators occurred in a session with W. R. Newbold the day after Hodgson, who was then still living, had been reading a biography of Sir Walter Scott.

During Newbold's session with Mrs. Piper, an obviously fictitious Walter Scott turned up and instructed Newbold about the solar system, saying among other things, that there are monkeys on the sun! But then there are sessions such as the one Hodgson arranged for a couple whose young daughter had died. This little girl not only seemed to communicate a wealth of accurate and specific information, but gave it from the viewpoint of the child rather than her parents. For instance, when the girl asked for her toy horse, the parents, who had brought one with them, placed it in the medium's hands, but the child rejected this one, asking for her big horse. Next session, they brought another, but this too was rejected, the medium showing the size of the horse and giving some further details. The parents then realized that she meant yet another horse, one that they had packed and forgotten about.

Aside from the personal associations and idiosyncrasies that argue against ESP from the living, Gauld suggests that the wealth of correct information in the best cases is unknown from living-agency ESP. Gauld also brings up cases for which the information from the ostensible communicator had to be verified by consulting not one but two living persons. Is living-agency telepathy up to such a task? Is it not more likely that Mrs. Piper became the mouthpiece for one deceased communicator than that she "... ransacked the memory stores of two separate (living) individuals and collated the results" (p. 43)? This is a question to which Gauld returns time and again.

Another round in the contest between ESP and the survival theory is known as the "book tests." These developed in the course of the mediumship of Gladys Leonard, to whom Gauld devotes the next chapter. In a book test, the ostensible communicator may refer to a page in a book located on a certain shelf in a house known to him or her when alive but unknown to the medium and to the sitter. Because telepathy with the living seemed to be excluded, the book tests were thought to be evidence for survival. In one of them, a young officer, who had fallen in World War I, seemingly came through with a message for his father. He directed his father to go to "... the ninth book of the third shelf counting from left to right in the bookcase on the right of the door in the drawing-room as you enter; take the title and look at page 37" (p. 47). The title was "Trees," and on page 37 (though beginning on the bottom of page 36) were the words, "Sometimes you will see curious marks in the wood; these are caused by a tunneling beetle, very injurious to the trees..." (p. 47). The young man's father was intensely interested in trees and his obsession with the beetle was a family joke. The message was appropriate, and the communicator was familiar with the book and bookshelf.

There were numerous book-test failures, but the analyses by Eleanor Sidgwick (1921) and others (Salter, 1923; Besterman, 1931-1932) suggest that chance alone could hardly explain all the successes.

In some of the successful book tests, the volumes were not only unfamiliar to the medium and sitter but, surprisingly, to the ostensible communicator as well. If we go to Eleanor Sidgwick's (1921) analysis of the book tests, we even find examples of material that was correctly communicated from pages never before read by anyone, the pages being uncut. This led her to suggest "that pure clairvoyance can sometimes be exercised" (p. 377), an observation that subsequently was verified by the card tests of J. B. Rhine and his colleagues at Duke University.

Another methodological innovation was the "proxy sitting." In this type of study, the sitter has no knowledge about the circumstances of the communicator and therefore, it has been assumed, cannot telepathically cue the medium (or provide sensory cues). Gauld, still quoting from the Leonard sittings, describes some of the proxy sittings. In the Bobby Newlove case, a boy who had died at the age of ten referred to a Jack-of-Hearts costume he had worn and mentioned other events in his life, which were verified later by his parents, the absent sitters. But he also spoke of things known only to a playmate. Again, it seems, we have a choice between the ESP theory, according to which Leonard tapped two sources, the memories of Bobby's parents as well as those of his friend, and the survival theory, according to which Bobby's surviving mind provided the single source for the information.

In most mediumistic studies, there is a physical link between the medium and one or more living persons who knew the deceased. This link may be a "psychometric" object associated with the deceased or it may be a living friend or relative. Such links seem to be absent for "drop-in" communicators, the subject of Gauld's next chapter. Drop-ins, a term coined by Ian Stevenson, appear uninvited in mediumistic sessions. They present difficulties for the ESP hypothesis because there seems to be no reason why "... the medium's supposed ESP should have hit upon facts about that particular deceased person" (p. 58). But drop-ins also present the investigator with a difficult methodological problem: since the target for the communication is not chosen by the investigator, it may be difficult to rule out the possibility that the medium normally heard or read about the death of someone and then, knowingly or unawares, fabricated a visit from the deceased. Gauld gives an example where this is likely to have occurred. If we are to take a drop-in case seriously, we must, Gauld

emphasizes, show that the medium could not have come across normal sources for the information. He gives an account of the Harry Stockbridge case, one of several he investigated. Gauld was able to establish that the Ouija board operators, through whom Stockbridge appeared, had had no contact with Stockbridge's family and that the obituaries (which had appeared in old and obscure publications) did not contain all the information produced in the Ouija board sessions. If this-world-ESP were at work, it would appear that the mediums would have had to respond to at least four "targets" and synthesize the information in the Ouija board messages.

Gauld next describes two cases involving the Icelandic medium Hafsteinn Björnsson, investigated by Erlendur Haraldsson and Ian Stevenson. I am not as confident about these cases as Gauld and the two investigators are. In the Runki case, the information about the deceased was available in the Icelandic National Archives, which, it was discovered, Björnsson had visited prior to the session. That this may have been the source of the "communication" rather than Runki's surviving mind is suggested by the fact that the medium incorrectly gave Runki's age as 50 rather than as 52, an error that appeared in the Archives.

The Runki case has a dramatic feature, which at first sight gives it an aura of veracity: the medium, speaking as Runki, said that his thighbone was entombed in the home of one of the sitters. (Runki drowned in 1879, and his dismembered body was found on the beach.) When a human femur was later discovered in one of the walls, this seemed convincing corroboration. But it was known by others in the area that a leg bone had been found on the beach and placed in the house before the sitter bought it. Björnsson had lived in a neighboring town for two years, so it seems possible that he might have heard about the bone. In any case, there is no record that it was Runki's thighbone or that this bone was missing from his body when it was found.

Haraldsson and Stevenson (1975, p. 47, footnote) refer to similar circumstances in three previous cases. In one, Björnsson was known to have visited an area where information about a communicator was available and then to have denied being there, and in two cases he gave incorrect information that corresponded with written records, indicating that he might have consulted these records prior to the sittings. There is no evidence of fraud in the other Björnsson drop-in case discussed by Gauld, but the suspicious circumstances in the Runki case and the three others call for caution in accepting nonexperimental material provided by this medium.

During the 100 years of psychical research, fewer than 20 convincing drop-ins have appeared. Gauld argues that if personality continues after death, we might have expected many more cases of deceased persons seeking mediums through whom they could contact their surviving relatives and friends. In general, Gauld finds little evidence in mediumistic communications for the type of motivation that was characteristic of the individuals when they were alive. But there seems to be a striking exception to this in the "cross-correspondences," a discussion of which makes up the better part of the chapter "Manifestations of Purpose."

The cross-correspondences were, it seems, initiated by a group of deceased SPR researchers whose main motivation after death seemed the same as it had been before: to produce convincing evidence for survival, now their own survival. In a cross-correspondence, seemingly disjointed statements by two or more mediums are found to reflect a theme known to a deceased individual. The themes often concerned classical Greek and Latin sources that were unfamiliar to the mediums but well known to the supposed communicators. These extensive and interlinked mediumistic writings and other impressions were received between 1901 and 1932. Gauld rules out chance coincidence and sensory cues as sufficient explanations, and I think justifiably. In the Browning-Hope-Star case, "Myers," writing through Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Verrall, and Helen Verrall (Mrs. Verrall's daughter), first indicated that he was going to attempt a cross-correspondence. Following this, anagrams, drawings, and quotations from Robert Browning, together with Greek phrases appeared in the writings of the three mediums. Finally, "Myers" pulled the threads together by giving the theme, "Browning, Hope, Star."

The classical and literary knowledge shown by this case went beyond Mrs. Piper's but not Ms. Verrall's, and Gauld discusses the theory that she rather than Myers may have been the agent and may have influenced her daughter and Mrs. Piper telepathically. There was an indication that this may have happened in another cross-correspondence, in which references to Dante appeared in the writings of the mediums after Mrs. Verrall had been reading Dante.

What most convinces a sitter that he or she is in touch with the spirit of a departed friend or relative is not the dry recitation of past events but mannerisms, favorite expressions, and other idiosyncrasies. In the chapter devoted to personal characteristics of the communicators, Gauld notes that a this-world-ESP theory for mediumistic communications not only entails remarkable ESP powers but also remarkable powers of impersonation.

In the same chapter, he argues that the display of special skills, unknown to the mediums, can also not be explained as ESP as we understand it. In the Lethe and Ear-of-Dionysius cases, discussed next, disjoined fragments from classical Greek and Latin sources were pulled together, revealing a working knowledge of classical literature well beyond that of the mediums (Mrs. Piper in the former case and Mrs. Coombe-Tennant in the latter) but familiar to the ostensible communicators. Yet again, it has been argued that Mrs. Verrall possessed the requisite knowledge and unconsciously supplied it to the mediums. Gauld questions this theory because there seem to be no instances of telepathic communications of such high quality among the living.

Particularly strong arguments against this-world-ESP would come from xenoglossy, the capacity to speak a language of which the person had no ordinary knowledge but which was familiar to the communicator. A possible example of responsive xenoglossy, where the person is able to converse in the foreign language, appeared in the 1930s. In the Rosemary case, a medium seemed to communicate with the wife of Amenhotep III and to use phrases and sentences in ancient Egyptian. A satisfactory study was never made, but C. J. Ducasse judged the language to be real (the Rosemary language is now being reexamined in a computer study by William H. Kautz [1982] for the Psychical Research Foundation).

Gauld next describes an apparent case of xenoglossy reported by Ian Stevenson. In the Jensen case, a woman from Philadelphia spoke at least 60 Swedish words. She was suspected of fraud in a later study, but Stevenson believes she acted in a dissociated state and found no evidence she entered into such states where she might have prepared herself for the Jensen communications.

In the chapter "Controls of Mediums," Gauld brings in the arguments by E. R. Dodds and others that mediumistic communications are dramatic constructs created by the medium around a core of ESP impressions. Gauld notes that the initiative for mediumistic communications nearly always comes from the living rather than from the dead, suggesting "... that whatever may be involved in mediumistic communications it is factors in this world that are crucial, rather than factors in the next" (p. 111). Another argument against the survival theory comes from the communicators themselves, in particular from the "controls," the supposed spirit entities who function as intermediaries between the medium and the deceased. Controls often claim to be deceased persons but consistently fail in providing verifiable information about their earthly lives. Some

communicators, too, are clearly fictitious, such as Piper's "Sir Walter Scott." What is particularly disturbing with respect to the status of mediumistic communications is that the veridical and "... most plausible communicators will in the firmest tones guarantee the authenticity of the least plausible ones, so that the authenticity of the former is inextricably and disadvantageously tied up with the authenticity of the latter ..." (p. 115).

Nevertheless, two of the Piper researchers, William James and Eleanor Sidgwick, leaned toward a survivalistic interpretation. Both found displays of dramatization and impersonation, but they also detected evidence of direction from the other side. James referred to this as "extraneous 'wills to communicate'" (p. 118). Gauld develops this theme in the concept of "overshadowing," the theory that the deceased communicator exercises a supervening role over the medium's mental capacities, directing without displacing.

In the next chapters, Gauld discusses two theories for ESP, the "transmission" and "correspondence" paradigms, and their shortcomings. I found this discussion confusing. In any case, according to Gauld's formulation, neither theory can account for the main facts of psychical research, in particular not for clairvoyance. The discussion does not seem to have a clear bearing on the main issue of the book, the choice between this-world-ESP and survival. This issue comes into sharper focus when Gauld measures the overshadowing theory and the super-ESP hypothesis against the data in the following chapter. It should be remembered that Gauld generally uses the term *super-ESP* not for some omniscient capacity but in terms of what is known about ESP. Thus, the super-ESP theory has difficulty in accounting for the information (obtained, say, by a medium) that combines material from several existing sources; it has difficulty in accounting for the display of capacities and skills known to the medium; it has difficulties in accounting for the lifelike representations of the deceased; and it has difficulties with the cross-correspondences in which different and separately meaningless parts provided by two or more mediums make up a single topic. Then, too, there is a fluency of delivery and specificity of facts in the most impressive cases of trance mediumship, which is rarely if ever found in spontaneous or experimental cases of ESP. Gauld speculates that this may be due to the liberating effect death may have upon the deceased person's ESP powers. Gauld measures these characteristics against the studies in which facts relating to living target persons were communicated by psi sensitives, such as the studies of Eugene Osty, Gustav Pagenstecher, and the famous Gordon Davis case (now suspect because of S. G. Soal's

supposed transgressions). Gauld finds that the speed of delivery, level of detail, and delineation of personal characteristics provided by the mediums go well beyond the studies involving living target persons. He also finds that the latter give no evidence of the acquisition of skills shown, say, in the literary puzzles (however, as Gauld notes, one or more of the living participants did possess the requisite skill and may have been the actual agent). But the main difference is that the information about a deceased communicator would have to be collated from several existing sources if super-ESP rather than communication from the deceased were responsible.

Gauld suggests that most of these observations make good sense in terms of the theory of overshadowing. Overshadowing "... is a kind of telepathy in which the *active endeavors* of the overshadowing person play a decisive role in determining the mental processes of the overshadowed person" (p. 143). There is, Gauld notes, little if any experimental evidence for this form of active-agency telepathy among the living. On the other hand, Gauld cites several cases of living persons (usually asleep or in dissociated states) who seem to communicate through mediums.

Can the overshadowing or survival theory be falsified or made implausible? In other words, is it testable? Gauld proposes that interpretations of mediumistic communications in terms of survival would be undermined if a medium were able to build up a fictitious communicator from fragments, each coming from the mind of a different living person. This type of ESP-collating is implied in the suggestion that Mrs. Verrall provided the themes for some of the cross-correspondence and literary puzzles (p. 144).

Gauld notes that the overshadowing theory by itself does not explain the accuracy and fluency of some communications, especially the trance communications. This is where we need also to suppose that deceased persons are better telepathic agents than living ones.

Cases of obsession and possession, which are treated in another chapter, are rarely taken seriously as evidence either for psi or survival, but Gauld refers to some suggestive examples. In possession, spirit entities, including deceased humans, seem to displace the victim from his or her body and take control over it. In obsession, the intruder only influences the person's mind.

An intriguing case of obsession, the Thompson-Gifford case, was investigated by J. H. Hyslop. After the death of the painter R. S. Gifford in 1905, Frederick Thompson, a goldsmith, began producing drawings and paintings that closely resembled sketches or paintings in Gifford's studio, which Thompson could not have seen. Thompson,

who "always [had] been dreamy and prone to reverie" (p. 158) now became incapable of attending to his work and went to see Hyslop. Hyslop first thought Thompson was mentally disturbed, but took him to a medium. This medium and others to whom Hyslop brought Thompson gave details of Gifford's circumstances and of incidents in Thompson's life when he seemed to be under Gifford's influence. One of them said that Gifford intended Thompson to carry on his work. Impelled to visit the Elizabeth Islands off the coast of Massachusetts, where Gifford often painted, Thompson found and photographed scenes that corresponded with sketches he had previously done from imagination and had left with Hyslop. On Naushon Island, Thompson heard a voice tell him to look on the other side of some trees. There he found Gifford's initials carved and the year, 1902. Hyslop later examined the carving and found it was too old to have been done during Thompson's visit. In Gauld's opinion, the super-ESP hypothesis is not merely complicated but "messy" as an explanation of this case, whereas the theory that Gifford overshadowed Thompson's "neuromuscular apparatus" is more straightforward.

As a possible example of possession, Gauld brings in the "Watseka Wonder." A 13-year-old girl, Lurancy, began to have "fits or trances" (p. 157) in July 1877 and was thought to have become insane. An acquaintance of the family, A. B. Roff, whose deceased daughter, Mary, had periods of insanity, brought a Dr. E. W. Stevens to see Lurancy. Various deceased persons now seemed to speak through Lurancy. Stevens then hypnotized the girl, and she claimed to be Roff's daughter, Mary, who had died at 18 when Lurancy was a year old. In the course of Lurancy's visits to the Roffs, she remembered things belonging to Mary and events from her life, some of which apparently could not have resulted from leading questions or sensory cues. Lurancy's personality returned a few months later and remained in control except for short interventions from Mary when Lurancy visited the Roffs. Her health also remained good, and there were no returns of the fits. In view of the initial trances and controls by deceased persons, Gauld suggests that Lurancy may have been "of the mediumistic type" (p. 159); and the case, one of overshadowing rather than true possession.

A more recent case is that of Uttara Huddar reported by Ian Stevenson and S. Pasricha (1980). Uttara Huddar, a woman in Nagpur, India, manifested a secondary personality, Sharada, who could speak only Bengali, a language supposedly unknown to Uttara in her normal state. In addition, Uttara accurately described village

life in Bengal in the early 19th century and gave the names of a family she claimed to have been a member of, which the two investigators were able to trace. When Gauld states that "Uttara denies all acquaintance" of Bengali, this is an overstatement since Stevenson and Pasricha note that Uttara had taken lessons in that language. The question is how much she knew. Uttara herself claimed that she had taken only two lessons, but her teacher said that she had come to him for tutoring in Bengali and other Indian scripts once or twice a week for three or four months. Supposedly, she had attained only a rudimentary knowledge (p. 341), however, and had not learned the correct pronunciation of Bengali words. But we are also told that her father had Bengali friends, so it seems difficult to rule out that she may have picked up the correct pronunciation from them or from Bengali movies and plays. Stevenson and Pasricha also inform us that Uttara experienced dissociative episodes before the Sharada personality fully emerged, so it seems conceivable that she had amnesia for the lessons her teacher claimed he gave her and perhaps for other occasions to learn Bengali.

In the chapter on reincarnation, Gauld examines cases of "hypnotic regression" into past lives, "memories" by nonhypnotized adults of supposed previous lives, and apparent rebirth memories of children. Gauld takes note of the current vogue for hypnotic regression and the "... school of fringe hypnotherapy ... which approaches behavioral disturbances in this life by seeking out their causes in a previous one" (p. 165). Gauld points out that any beneficial effects of this approach do not necessarily mean that the past life was real.

There seem to be no verified cases of directed hypnotic regression, and there are also no convincing cases of directed nonhypnotic regression. The spontaneous cases of apparent rebirth memories in children studied by Ian Stevenson are more convincing. After a discussion of Stevenson's methods of case investigation, Gauld notes that there are only a few cases (I believe Stevenson has published seven so far) where the child's statements were recorded before attempts at verification were made. Once a match between memories and events was found, Stevenson sought to determine whether the child might have overheard adults speak about the previous personality or whether other familiar sources of information might have been involved. In many cases there was a possibility of sensory cues because the two families lived within close reach or had acquaintances in common. Stevenson found that, in addition to memories of the past life and recognitions of places, belongings, and persons associated with the previous life, the children sometimes showed attitudes and behaviors that accorded with those of the previous personality.

Could supposed rebirth memories be due to ESP, for instance to telepathy between the child and members of the family of the previous personality? Gauld, like Stevenson, finds this theory suffers from several shortcomings. For instance, why should the life about one particular individual be selected as target, and why would the child usually show no special ESP abilities in other situations? Then, too, the telepathically acquired information would have to come from more than one source and, furthermore, to have been organized in a pattern appropriate to the previous personality. Gauld finds himself in agreement with Stevenson, that there is "... a growing body of evidence that permits a rational belief in reincarnation, even though this evidence falls far short of being decisive" (p. 187).

Gauld emphasizes the need to relate the findings of parapsychology, including those suggestive of survival, to modern neuroscience and physics. If memory and other cognitive functions may continue after the living brain has disintegrated, how are we to conceptualize the connection between these functions and the brain prior to death?

In "Memory and the Brain," Gauld questions the view that memory "... is entirely a function of the brain" (p. 189). He suggests instead that memory and other cognitive functions involve supervening principles that are not reducible to the laws governing lower brain processes but exert a casual influence on them. This "... places the phenomena of memory among a class of psychological phenomena which cannot be explained in terms of, but rather supervene upon, the complex patterns of electrochemical activity manifested by the brain ..." (p. 213).

Gauld observes that "... memories lost after shock or actual damage to the brain may sometimes reinstate themselves in ways that suggest that they are now sustained or underpinned by the activity of neural elements other than those which originally sustained them" (p. 213, footnote). He then asks, "Could this autonomy extend so far as reinstatement in some other setting altogether?" (p. 214). For instance, could a deceased person's memories supervene upon a living person's brain? It is interesting that two distinguished neuroscientists, Sir John Eccles and Wilder Penfield, have come to the conclusion that mind is extraneous to the brain and that mental processes are not reducible to neurochemical brain processes, but on the contrary direct them. Though Gauld does not draw on Eccles and Penfield, his ideas seem consistent with theirs, and for all three a mind conceivably may exist without its body.

In the chapter on out-of-body experiences (OBEs) and apparitions, Gauld asks if the hypothetical survival of supervening functions may

also involve the survival of that person as a conscious individual. OBEs, in which a person experiences himself or herself apart from the physical body, may suggest that conscious separation is possible, especially when there is a veridical aspect to the experience. This, together with near-death experiences (NDEs), has led to the proposal that we possess a surrogate body that can separate briefly from the physical body during life and permanently after death. (Gauld refers to the NDE as a "variety of OBE" [p. 221]. This is taking too narrow a view of NDEs; for instance, the life review common during NDEs does not necessarily involve an out-of-body experience.) But OBEs and NDEs "... are heavily influenced by cultural factors, which would hardly be the case if the experiences were insights into the nature of the soul and of the world to come" (p. 227). As an example of this, he says, "The self-induced OBEs of shamans and witch-doctors are wildly different from those of our own tame astral travellers. . . . Those undergoing NDEs in our society tend to find themselves moving towards a peaceful and harmonious realm of indescribable beauty; mediaeval NDEs contain horrific visions of hell, as well as visions of a heaven which not everyone would enjoy" (p. 227). As for cases in which the OBE traveller brings back veridical information beyond sensory range, Gauld sees no problem in supposing that this, as in other forms of ESP, may be incorporated into a hallucinatory experience.

Reincarnation cases, too, are heavily influenced by cultural factors, according to Ian Stevenson. This is true with respect to the distribution of the cases and with respect to their characteristics. There are more cases in cultures that treat reincarnation as religious dogma, and in those cultures the quality of the cases is higher than it is in cultures lacking this belief. Then, within cultures that accept reincarnation, the form differs—in some countries, reincarnation only occurs within the same family, in others there is no such restriction; in some groups rebirth is more or less instantaneous, in others years may intervene; and in some societies sex changes between reincarnations is common, in others impossible. Gauld does not discuss this aspect of rebirth cases and its effect on the evidence they provide for survival. In this context, it should also be noted that mediumship and post-mortem apparitions seem to be culturally determined. Stevenson observes that both types of phenomena are absent among the Druses of Lebanon and the Alevis of Turkey: such incidents are not permitted by their belief in immediate rebirth.

Although Gauld rejects the theory of what he calls "animism," the view that the human mind is "bound up with some kind of extended

quasi-physical vehicle," (p. 222) which underlies OBEs and apparitional experiences and which contains or supports consciousness after death, he is more hospitable to Myers's idea that apparitions of the living, as well as of the dead, may involve "psychorrhagic diathesis" (p. 251), literally, a capacity to "let the soul break loose" and to cause a modification in space such that an apparition is seen there. A theory such as this would accommodate two features of some apparitional experiences, namely, the simultaneous sighting of an apparition by two or more persons (referred to as "collective" cases) and the sighting of an apparition not by the "intended" or appropriate person, but near this person by someone else ("bystander" cases). The theory would also account for apparitions that are repeatedly seen in the same area ("haunting" cases). Gauld touches on the physical phenomena of hauntings associated with apparitional sightings. He brings in a recent apparitional study by the psychiatrist M. Schatzman. "Ruth," one of Schatzman's patients, supposedly is able to generate hallucinations of herself and of other people. The apparitions are so real to her that the normal electrical responses of her brain to a flickering light are blocked when the figure is interposed between her eyes and the light. The apparitions are also real to others. On two occasions, other persons have seen the figures though Ruth was not then attempting to produce them. One of them held a conversation with the apparition, believing it to be a real person. Another time, a dog became disturbed when Ruth generated a phantasm near it, an incident reminiscent of other apparitional cases.

In the concluding chapter, Gauld outlines some directions future research might take: (1) Mediumistic experiments with living communicators should be conducted because they may illustrate the mechanism of communication and enable us to see how tenable the overshadowing theory is. Such studies may also enable us to gauge the strength of the theory that mediumistic communicators are dramatic impersonations produced by the medium. (2) Experiments with sensitives such as those by Osty should be conducted using better experimental designs. If results are obtained equal to those obtained in mediumistic communications, this may tend to support the ESP interpretation of the latter. (3) Studies should be done of gifted subjects such as "Ruth" who seem to have the ability to generate hallucinations of themselves and other people. This would throw light on the nature of veridical apparitions. (4) Studies should be made of the localized physical disturbances found in haunting cases and of the relationship between the physical and apparitional experiences. For cases that show evidence of an intelligence behind the incidents, one

could bring in several mediums and sensitives to see if their impressions coincide.

Gauld believes that relevant discoveries will come from neuroscience and physics and that attempts should be made to reconcile the findings from these fields with those of psychical research.

In general, I enjoyed the factual parts of the book. Gauld has a gift in summarizing experiments and case studies in ways that bring them back to life, often more vividly than the originals. His theorizing is less satisfactory, his arguments are sometimes loosely woven, and his opinions not always clear. But, then, the issue is complex, and Gauld does not claim to have either a theory of the processes underlying this-world-ESP or of the processes underlying a possible post-mortem existence.

But he does have something important to say about the possible interaction between surviving personalities and the living brains through which they seem to manifest: namely, the concept of overshadowing and the related memory-brain theory. The theory of overshadowing is consistent with some of the findings, for instance, the observation that a medium's cognitive equipment is usually not replaced during ostensible communications, but on the contrary is used to express the information in question. The memory-brain theory is consistent with recent observations in neuropsychology, that mental states may have a supervening influence on brain structures and are not reducible to the electrochemical functions of any of these structures.

There is an omission in Gauld's account of the survival evidence and a related omission in his treatment of the super-ESP hypothesis. Gauld mentions the psychometric practices of the SPR mediums and the similar practices of the psi sensitives studied by Eugene Osty, Gustav Pagenstecher, and W. F. Prince, but he ignores psychometric theories of ESP and survival. Most of these theories are not sophisticated, but they deserve mention because they extend the sweep of this-world-ESP and because they point to structures that may support the memories and other aspects of deceased individuals. These theories spring from the observation that psychics seem only to succeed or to succeed better under three conditions: (1) if they hold an object associated with the target person; (2) if they are in contact with someone who knew the deceased; or (3) if they visit the latter's (perhaps "haunted") home. These situations may provide sensory cueing, but the information sometimes seems to be beyond what can be expected by such means. Psychometry and related practices may

suggest that past events may function as ESP targets. These practices may also suggest that physical objects can act as channels for ESP information: the information obtained by the subject is not necessarily restricted to the history of the "psychometric object" but may include other events in the life of the person who has been in contact with it. A psychometric theory for ESP has an immediate effect on the contest between this-world-ESP and survival. If we allow for psychometry, this increases the range of ESP targets a medium may have access to. This increase has a significant effect especially for the cases in which information relating to a deceased person is now only available from two or more living persons or has to be collated from several obituaries and other separate sources. With a psychometric account, the argument for survival loses its force when it is based on cases in which, say, a medium obtains information relating to a deceased person that is known to two or more living individuals: once we grant the possibility of psychometric targets (whether we picture these as connected with deceased communicators or not), we need no longer suppose that the medium has had to collate ESP from several living brains or physical objects. For instance, in the Bobby Newlove case, the boy's life history would have provided a single target for Mrs. Leonard's ESP. She would not have needed to consult the minds of the parents and the mind of his playmate by ESP and then fit the two accounts together.

It is difficult for us to imagine that the physical world, which we usually think of as material and inanimate, could be permeated by properties such as memory records, which we associate with living minds or brains. But some contemporary physicists insist that the mind-matter distinction may not be as sharp as we commonly suppose. A suggestion by David Bohm (1982), a theoretical physicist at the University of London, is particularly suggestive. Bohm proposes that "the world of familiar physical structures has room in it for something like memory in the sense that previous moments generally leave a trace that continues in later moments. . . . From this trace (e.g., in the rocks) it is in principle possible for us to unfold an image of past moments, similar in certain ways to what actually happened" (pp. 207-208). Bohm notes that human memory is a special case of this process, for memories are "enfolded" within brain cells, which are a part of matter. From this, it follows, according to Bohm, that the "explicate" and manifest order of consciousness cannot be distinguished from the material world and that the two are only different aspects of a "higher dimensional actuality . . . [that also fills the] inward depths of consciousness" (pp. 209-210).

If mediums use psychometry to describe deceased personalities, does that not mean that the "targets" are mechanical recordings with no more life and consciousness than a fossilized remain or a tape recording? In response to this possibility, we may return to William James's (1909) study of Mrs. Piper, from which Gauld quoted extensively. James suggested that the memories of a person may continue "psychometrically" in the physical objects associated with the person while he or she was alive. This system of traces may then be activated in a mediumistic session after the person's death, amounting to a "spirit redivivus" of the deceased and of "recollecting and willing in a certain momentary way" (p. 120) characteristic of that person. James's idea may accommodate other types of evidence suggestive of survival. Edmund Gurney, in a joint paper with Myers (1888-1889), found that apparitions of the dead "fall under two heads, which we may distinguish as the *personal* and the *local*. That is to say, this experience either befalls some person who has been linked with the deceased by close ties, or it befalls someone in a place in which the deceased, when alive, was strongly interested. Sometimes . . . the two characteristics are combined" (p. 408). L. E. Rhine (1957) more recently found 15 of 49 visual apparitions of the dead to be of the local or "haunting" type, 9 to be local and personal because the apparition was seen in the location he or she used to occupy and was also known to the percipient; 16 were personal because the percipient had known the deceased, and 8 were personal of the "bystander" type. In the latter, the percipient, who had not known the deceased, saw the apparition near a person who had. In a variation of this type of case, an apparition of a boy may have been seen by an acquaintance of the boy's mother. Rhine observes that bystander ". . . cases are suggestive of the haunting cases, the main difference . . . being that in these the link is a person rather than a geographical location" (p. 39). Even in drop-in cases there usually is a fairly close link between the medium and the ostensible communicator. This appears to be true for the five drop-ins from Gauld's study, which seemed immune from explanations in terms of sensory cues, chance coincidence, and so on. Thus, Duncan Stevens had lived "within fairly easy reach of" Cambridge where the Ouija board sessions were held; Robert Fletcher came from the same district as one of the operators of the board; Gustav Biederman had lived in London, with which we can assume the sitters were familiar; and Nora Hentell had lived about a dozen miles from the grandparents of one of the operators of the board. Harry Stockbridge, who came from a city that one of the sitters had once visited, showed the weakest link with the group (there may of

course have been other links than the ones Gauld was able to uncover). Rebirth cases also seem to show personal or local connections. Usually the child who seems to recall a previous life lives near the friends or family of the deceased.

It is interesting that in two of the cases Gauld discusses in the chapter on obsession and possession, there were personal links between the deceased and the living person through whom he or she seemed to return. Thompson had met Gifford, and the father of Mary Roff was visiting Lurancy when Mary seemed to possess her. With respect to Uttara and Sharada, her Bengali alter ego, we know that Uttara's father had Bengali friends but not whether they came from Sharada's home town.

As I have noted elsewhere (Roll, 1982), some of the apparent connections in the apparitional, mediumistic, and rebirth cases may be the result of reporting artifacts, but some may be real.

Is there any way to distinguish what we may call a mechanical playback of a past life from a conscious one? For instance, is ESP, including psychometry involving deceased persons, different from ESP and psychometry involving living persons, and is this difference such as to suggest the agency of the deceased? Gauld found ostensible communications from the deceased to be on the whole more accurate than ESP from the living. This may suggest that the death of the physical organism increases a person's psi abilities and hereby may support the survival hypothesis. Martin Johnson (in press), Professor of Parapsychology at Utrecht University, has recently designed an experiment that, among other things, will test the theory that psychometric objects associated with deceased persons have a stronger stimulating power than do objects associated with the living. I would also like to see cases of responsive xenoglossy that rule out cryptomnesia. We are yet to find a convincing report, but, as I mentioned before, one may be in the offing.

There is another topic Gauld touches on but does not develop as fully as I think it needs to be. Gauld rejects OBEs as providing a reliable guide to a life after death because they are culturally determined. The same, however, appears to be true for mediumship, apparitions of the dead, and rebirth cases, which Gauld finds more acceptable.

If we take seriously the evidence suggestive of survival, it seems that we must also take seriously the possibility that the next world may not be the same for everybody. Life after death may depend on the beliefs of the person and the social group to which he or she belonged in life.

H. H. Price (1953), the Oxford philosopher and former SPR President, suggests in his seminal paper "Survival and the Idea of 'Another World' " that the nature of life after death may indeed differ according to a person's beliefs. Price proposes that the next world may be a world constructed of the person's own mental images, including visual, auditory, and tactile images. This does not mean that each person's world would be completely private or subjective. Persons with similar interests and beliefs may interact telepathically and hereby share the same image environment. (Like Gauld, Price suggests that a person's telepathic powers may increase once the limitations of biological life are removed.) The next world then would be a joint product of like-minded individuals, different from other after-death worlds. These worlds would be influenced by the individual's wishes and needs, including those that were repressed during life. Price suggests that such a world might only exist as long as the underlying desires are unfulfilled. When they are played out, the familiar human personality may be replaced by the kind of existence pictured by eastern and western mystics.

Price's idea of a post-mortem world shared by like-minded individuals fits well with another conceptualization of the afterlife, Gardner Murphy's (1945) theory of the "interpersonal field." Murphy made three main points about the interpersonal field. (1) The field is more than the sum of its parts, (2) it can best be experienced in dissociated states of consciousness, and (3) survival after death, if it occurs, is a continuation of the interpersonal field rather than of individual existence.

1. Murphy observed that telepathy is typically concentrated within groups. Two or more persons "somehow, while remaining themselves, yet become a single, psychical entity." In psi experiments, the psychic structure includes the experimenter. The theory hereby accounts for the experimenter effect, and Murphy was one of the first to call attention to this type of psi interaction.

2. Perhaps his most important point is that "complex organized wholes," such as interpersonal fields, "cannot be understood in terms of ingredient parts." Murphy (1949-1952) developed this theme in his presidential address to the SPR: "... the world of interpersonal phenomena is a world which must be faced on its own terms . . . its laws made clear and recognized to be essentially different from those laws which apply to individuals" (p. 11).

3. Murphy's ideas about a possible life after death combine the first two points. If there is survival, it will be a continuation of the interpersonal field, and it will be characterized by altered states of

awareness in which the orientation of the person is no longer limited to the biological needs of the body but reflects the interpersonal structure he or she is a part of. Some mediumistic studies may suggest that deceased personalities may join in such structures. In a mediumistic study, J. H. Hyslop (1907) noted that the communicator mixed together the memories of a deceased man with those of his daughter. In a later study (1918), he reported that the deceased confused the names of his sister and mother (p. 346) and that another "lost completely the sense of personal identity" (p. 347). Similarly, Stevenson (1973) reported a case in which a medium described events from the lives of two brothers as if they were one, and Haraldsson (in Stevenson, 1973) investigated a case in Iceland where statements about the primary communicator reportedly were mixed up with material about that person's father-in-law. Of the seven rebirth cases from Stevenson's collection in which the child's statements were recorded prior to the verification process, two may also suggest the continuation of an interpersonal structure. In the Swarnlata Mishra case, a girl correctly stated that the previous personality had two sons, but the names she remembered them by were those of the woman's brother-in-law and father-in-law; and in the Imad Elawar case, events from the lives of two deceased cousins were intertwined in the boy's memories.

If, as many have suggested, the brain acts as a filter to exclude biologically irrelevant or detrimental information, and if there is continuity of personality after death, this may involve a configuration that includes several individuals as suggested by Murphy and Price. Such a configuration, if we follow James, may include the structures of the familiar physical world and may be accessed by means of them.

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